

Due dates for Kenai Refuge permits just around the corner

by Rebecca Uta

As I reflect on the last six months of the year, I'm appreciative of the absolute flurry of activity both recreationally and commercially here on the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge. I see a lot of the folks who come in to apply for permits, as well as most of the paperwork associated with this important but sometimes not-so-fun permit process.

How about your summer? If you are a commercial guide on the Refuge, the spring months were filled with collecting your annual business documents, visiting with our permitting staff at the Refuge Headquarters office on Ski Hill Road to pick up our colorful Refuge stickers, and then meeting your summer clients.

Now that the summer has flowed past us—the boats have been shored and wrapped, the planes are being fitted with skis and the trees are bare save for the spruce—the administrative work at the Refuge never ends. With the cold winds blowing down from the mountain peaks, the season of deadlines has arrived, and we have some lurking around the corner. Don't miss these dates or, as Douglas Adams said, "I Love Deadlines, I love the whooshing noise they make as they go by."

Mark your calendars:

- Commercial Client Use Reports are due November 15, 2017.
- Applications for new and expiring permits must be received no later than April 1, 2018.
- The Annual Trapping and Snare Orientation will be held Tomorrow, October 28, 2017, starting at 9 a.m. in the Environmental Education Center.
- Trapping on the Refuge Season Opens November 10, 2017. Permits are available now.
- Firewood Collection Permits are still available.
- Don't forget Subsistence Hunting Harvest Tickets—due dates do vary depending on season and personal harvest date.

Remember these dates! It'll help your upcoming season start without a hitch so you can get out and

fish or float or fly or hunt... or outfit, as the case may be.

Here's some Refuge trivia: On an average year, we process well over 500 permits. These permits cover the most recent activities (firewood collection and trapping), to on-going annual commercial guiding and industrial activities on lands leased to commercial oil & gas operators, as well as collaboration with our right-of-way permittees and in-holder access programs, just to share a few slices of the permit pie.

Interaction between our community and program administrators occurs most often through our front desk. The permit technician will usually be the one to greet you with a kind hello and a smile, while waiting to hear how we can help find what you need. A large percentage of time, you will work solely with our administrative staff, as small as it is with a total of two, sometimes three individuals.

You do not need a permit to enjoy the Refuge for a personal recreational activity such as camping with family and friends or hiking any of our trails. However, if you engage in any commercial activity such as guiding, film-making, or providing commercial transportation, or if you propose to conduct scientific or geological research or other non-recreational activities, a Special Use Permit is required.

Call the Refuge Headquarters with any questions or concerns. Alternatively, check out our website under the Kenai Refuge Permits page (<https://www.fws.gov/refuge/Kenai/visit/permits.html>). Here, you can learn about the general permitting process and get most questions answered about our permits.

Speaking of the color of our permit stickers, I always wondered if there is a pool amongst the guides to guess what this year's colors might be and if anyone ever dreads when pink might come back. Our local office has had some changes and I will be selecting the color scheme this year. It might be a tied-dye year—maybe not... camo? Pink camo. Maybe hot neon pink! I digress. I don't think those colors are in our selection palette.

Continue to have fun out there this coming winter and don't forget our administrative folks at the Kenai Refuge Headquarters office.

Rebecca Uta is the Administrative Officer at Kenai National Wildlife Refuge. Find more information about the Refuge at <http://kenai.fws.gov> or <http://www.facebook.com/kenainationalwildliferefuge>.